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BUDDHISM IN THE AGE OF SCIENCE

—Buddha Sakyamuni as Viewed by a Scientist—

by Yoichi Yamamoto, Dr. of Engineering
Professor at Nihon University

1. Buddhism teaches the fundamental truth.

The Japanese word for religion is *shukyo*, which is interpreted in the Japanese way. *Shu* means most important; and *kyo*, teaching. Hence, *shukyo* means what teaches the most important thing. Buddhism is a religion which teaches the fundamental truth established by Buddha Sakyamuni.

The fundamental truth is the most important thing that all the people should follow. Buddhism which teaches it is only the true religion in the world.

This meaning of religion is not yet known. Religion has hitherto been interpreted as what give us peace of mind and makes us feel life worth living. By this misinterpretation religion has been separated from science. Here we have the wrong view that the progress of science makes religion useless, or that science has its limits and leaves the outside of the limits to religion. The true religion which teaches the fundamental truth leads to science.

It does not separate itself from science, but leads to it. Therefore, it is all the more necessary in the age of science.

2. The way of change of all things.

The fundamental truth shows us how all things should be. All things in this universe originated from one thing and have their own way of change. This way of change of all things is revealed by the fundamental truth. In other words, all things in this universe exist in accordance with this truth. This is the ultimate truth in this world.

The original thing which creates all things is an ultimate existence, which is not matter, but not nothing. It pervades all the space in this universe, and creates things under various conditions. All things in this universe, including things on the earth, are created in the ultimate existence. Therefore, human beings, with their lives and minds, are ultimate existence itself. The ultimate existence is found in phenomenal things, not in the form of itself.

According to Buddhism, this ultimate existence is called *sunyata*. All things, which are created by sunyata, void, change according to a certain law. This law is called *dharma* in Buddhism. This dharma is the fundamental truth which shows the way that all things should be. The sunyata, which is the ultimate existence of all things, fills the universe in the form of infinitesimal particles. Some of the

particles which are condensed and fixed by the distortion of the sunyata turn into matter. The phenomena of matter are caused by the fiuidity of sunyata which acted to matter. This sunyata is called energy by modern scientists.

3. Buddha Sakyamuni found out the fundamental truth.

All things and phenomena are the sunyata in their origin. The sunyata makes everything. This is the fundamental truth of all things. Without the knowledge of this fundamental truth, we cannot see the way that a human being should be. This truth reveals the Buddhist teaching that matter and mind are one. This truth unites materialism with spiritualism. Our social activities are manifold. They are politics, economy, law, industry, art, education and so forth, which are the phenomen of human society. Out of these, things that are produced by the fundamental truth are right, true, good and beautiful, while others are not. Generally speaking, human life is full of suffering, because it is full of things not produced by the fundamental truth.

Buddhism teaches what this fundamental truth is. Buddha Sakyamuni found this truth, and expounded it, in order to give us peace of mind and the eye to see the truth.

4. The Buddha's words expressing this truth.

All things change ; appear, and disappear. The Buddha says that all things are impermanent. All things are fixed and secured in themselves. This state of things is

called by the Buddha the state of "Nirvana, calm and tranquil". All things are dependet on each other and have no substantiality by themselves. The Buddha says that all things have no self. The three traits of things: impermanence, tranquility, and interdependence, constitute the fundamental truth. From this truth comes out the teaching that the cause of existence is twofold; primary and enviromental. The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are also based on this truth. The words of the Buddha expressing this truth may be rendered as follows:

All things in this world
Are made from one thing
That is called sunyata.

All things that are made
Are helping each other,
Depending of each other.
When they are in harmony,
They are quiet, and at peace.
When the harmony is spoilt,
Things change, come and go.
Though the things in this world
Repeat their changes endlessly,
The Way that their changes should be
Cannot be changed, destroyed.
It enlightens all people forever.

Everything in this world, whether it is the body of a

human being, or his mind, or anything produced by his mind, is good in so far as it accords with the fundamental truth, and is not good in so far as it is against the truth. Nature works in accordance with this truth, but man does not always. Here lies the roots of his suffering and evils. The social evils of today come from lack of knowledge of this truth. To teach all the people of today the fundamental truth established by Buddha Sakyamuni is the only way to the peace of the world.

5. The position of Buddhism in the age of science.

The fundamental truth of Buddha Sakyamuni is to be relied on, not to be sought for. Western scholars have hitherto tried to find this truth, not to rely on it, so that they have formed many perverted views. The scientists tried to find laws, by establishing many hypotheses, but do not yet reach the reality of all things. They do not yet understand, for instance, what electricity really is. It will be made clear only when we see that electricity is the sunyata which appears through the medium of metal. Electricity has no independet existence. It is a phenomenon of the sunyata which is connected with metal.

The opinion that religion is not necessary to a scientist may be true as far as the other religions than Buddhism are concerned. Buddhism teaches the fundamental truth that rectifies the preverted views involved in science.

6. Buddhism and mechanical civilization.

Men have been endeavoring, since the appearance on this earth, to make their living happier and more pleasant by utilizing that part of Nature which they find around them. Present civilization has been made as the result of this endeavor of human beings. In olden times, they made things by their hands, but, in the course of time, many kinds of machine were made, thanks to the fundamental truth which led men to the making of machine, whether they were aware that they were led by the truth or not.

We should realize that the mechanical civilization of today is based on the fundamental truth. This truth has made the progress of the civilization and brought prosperity to men. Human life of today is enriched, given light, and made pleasant by this truth. If we forget this and ignore the fundamental truth, the richness of the human life of today will be lost. It is urgently necessary to let all the people know what the fundamental truth is in order to develop the mechanical civilization to a more satisfactory extent.

In present business circles, human relations are considered to be one of the most important factors in the process of production. It is also generally held that the best quality is guaranteed when all the conditions in the process of production are in harmony. These facts show that the fundamental truth works as the basic principle in modern

industry.

7. The fundamental truth is the core of Buddhism.

The fundamental truth is the most important teaching of Buddhism. All Buddhists should reconfirm that this truth is the ruling principle of human life, constituting a true religion. This truth should be the principal theme of Buddhist preachings. Buddha Sakyamuni was the Great Saint, becruse he found this truth, which is applicable to Nature and man.

In the fundamental truth
There is the royal road
To a rich, bright, pleasant life
For all the people in the world
Who wish to have peace of mind.
Those who see this fundamental truth
As the most important teaching
Will be shown the true realities
Of all the things in this world.
They will be given power enough
To save all beings as well.

Buddhism is a religion which reveals the fundamental truth, leads science to the right path, and saves all people from their suffering. In this sense we can say that Buddhism is the only true religion in this world.